IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-5   (Cancelled).

6.   (Previously Presented)   An Internet telephony system for providing communications involving a user communicating through an Internet browser, comprising a server hosting a Web site providing a user interface to permit a user to select and purchase items of interest, said server executing an application program communicating with telephony hardware to implement telephony system control, said application program having an application programming interface, said application program interface functions comprising at least one call to an external program, wherein said server proactively transmits a message to the Internet browser based on an automated analysis of a status of a user's Internet shopping cart, representing items of interest having an unconcluded transaction status, requesting establishment of an interactive voice communication session, and wherein the user can allow initiation of the interactive voice communication session through the Internet browser, in accordance with a predefined set of user preferences defining a user's preferred communications mode, selected from the group consisting of voice over a data packet switched network and a public switched telephone network, and wherein the user's selected items of interest in the shopping cart are independent of the establishment of the interactive voice communication session.

7.   (Cancelled)

8.   (Previously Presented)   The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the user preferences are retrieved in a cookie.

9.   (Previously Presented)   The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the user interactively communicates with the Web site to establish the status, the request for establishment of an interactive voice communication session being responsive to an economic interest of a party distinct from the user.

10.   (Cancelled).

11.   (Previously Presented)   The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the Internet browser presents a hyperlink to the user, a selection of said hyperlink causing the Internet browser to communicate with the server, retrieve user-related data, and open a voice over Internet protocol communication between the user and a second party.

12.   (Previously Presented)   The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the user is charged for the communication.

13.   (Previously Presented)   The telephony system according to claim 12, wherein the user is charged a micropayment.

14.   (Previously Presented)   The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the set of user preferences is retrieved in a cookie from the browser.

15.   (Cancelled).

16.   (Previously Presented)   The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the initiation of the interactive voice communication is dependent on at least an economic interest of a party distinct from the user.

17.   (Cancelled).

18.   (Previously Presented)   The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the external program comprises a dynamic link library adapted to run under Microsoft Windows operating system.

19.   (Previously Presented)   The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the application program may spawn a plurality of instances of the external program simultaneously.

20. (Previously Presented) The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the application program has a first component running on a telephony server and a second component running on each telephony client.

21. (Previously Presented) The telephony system according to claim 6, further comprising a communications link to the Web server, for coordinating telephony functions and Web server functions.

22. (Previously Presented) The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the application program interfaces with a monetary accounting system.

23. (Previously Presented) The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the application program interfaces with a micropayment accounting system.

24. (Previously Presented) The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the application program supports an application service provider payment model.

25. (Previously Presented) The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the user, in order to communicate with the server to request the voice communication, need only initiate a generic action which is interpreted by the server in accordance with the status and the set of user preferences to initiate an appropriate response.

26. (Previously Presented) The telephony system according to claim 6, supporting simultaneous voice and data communications with the user, for receiving the request to establish the voice communication with the user over a digital data communications channel and in response to the received request, establishing the user voice communication in dependence the set of user preferences, wherein the voice over packet data network communicates through the data communications channel and the public switched telephone network communicates over a communications channel distinct from the data communications channel.

27. (Previously Presented)   The telephony system according to claim 26, wherein said digital data communications channel carries data between the Internet browser and the server, the server communicating with a distinct server for establishing the user voice communication channel involving the public switched telephone network.

28. (Previously Presented)   The telephony system according to claim 6, wherein the user interactively communicates through the data packet switched network to establish the status, said server being further responsive to an economic interest of a party distinct from the user.

29. (Previously Presented)   A telephony server, comprising an application program executing under an operating system, communicating directly with telephony hardware to implement telephony system control, having an application programming interface, wherein said application program includes as one of its is application programming interface functions a call to an external program also executing under the operating system, the application program supporting a plurality of instances of the external programs simultaneously, each external program implementing call handling logic for at least one voice communications channel.

30. (Previously Presented)   The telephony server according to claim 29, wherein the application program comprises a dynamic link library adapted to run under Microsoft Windows.

31. (Previously Presented)   The telephony server according to claim 29, wherein the application program has a component running on a telephony server and a component running on each telephony client.

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Previously Presented)   The telephony server according to claim 29, further comprising a communications interface for communicating with a Web server, for coordinating telephony functions and Web server functions.

34. (Previously Presented) The telephony server according to claim 29, wherein the application program communicates with a server hosting a Web site providing a user interface to permit a user to select and purchase items of interest, wherein said server proactively communicates with the user in dependence on an automated analysis of a status of a user's Internet shopping cart, representing items of interest having an unconcluded transaction status, requesting establishment of an interactive voice communication session.

35. (Currently Amended) A method for communicating, comprising providing a server executing an application program under an operating system, having an application programming interface; communicating directly between the application program and telephony hardware to implement telephony system control; and invoking, through the application program interface, a plurality of simultaneously executing instances of an external program simultaneously, each external program implementing call handling logic for at least one voice communications channel and executing under the operating system.